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REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

The Examiner rejected claims 19-22 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention.

First, the Examiner stated that it was not clear how the lock ring actually functions to lock the mold top and bottom halves together. Clarification is required. Also, the Examiner stated that claims 19 and 25 recite "said lock ring is selectively connected to said first lock rod at first said quick connect coupling." The Examiner said that the meaning of "selectively" should be clarified as to how the lock ring is actually connected. Applicant respectfully refers to the subject application on page 8, line 14 through page 10, line 11. This portion of the application specifically describes how the self-locking means 15 locks the top mold half 13 to the bottom mold half 14 without the need for additional support. Generally, this invention is applicable to a segmented mold. It is the mere placement around the mold segments which prevents the mold segments from moving radially outward. Applicant respectfully states that one of ordinary skill in the art knows the function of a lock ring and how it prevents movement of the mold segments. Applicant respectfully states that the only forces seen by the lock ring are radial because the mold segments may only move radially inward or outward. As described in the application, the mold segments actually move inward and outward through a cam-follower actuator 121, which is shown in Figures 5 and 6. Applicant also states that the word "selectively" refers to whether or not the lock ring is in the lock or unlocked and that by using the invention disclosed herein, a decision is made to either lock or unlock the mold. As described in the present application, to lock the segmented mold 12, the lock cylinder 141 lowers the lock frame 142 until the lock ring

145 is positioned around the segmented mold 12. This shows the "selective" locking of the segmented mold 12. To selectively remove the lock ring, the lock motors 143 are driven causing the quick connect couplings 146 to connect with the lock rods 144. This reconnects the lock rods 144 with the lock ring 145. The lock cylinder 141 is then raised, lifting the lock ring 145 and thereby unlocking the segmented mold 12. Applicant respectfully contends that this explanation is sufficient to clarify the function of the lock ring 145 and the term "selectively."

The Examiner also requested that the nexus between the lock ring, first lock motor, and first lock rod be provided in claim 19. Applicant has amended claim 19 to incorporate limitations found in claim 21 as suggested.

Claim 21 has been amended to recite that the lock cylinder is what is lowering the lock frame. Claim 21 was amended by deleting the steps "coupling, and lift said locking mechanism away from the mold." Applicant respectfully contends that the method of claim 21 appropriately recites the steps of the inventive method. Claim 21 was also amended to recite the step of "locking said mold in a closed position." The following step of lifting away the locking mechanism is a part of the present invention as described above.

The dependencies of claims 20 and 22 have been corrected. Applicant respectfully contends that the claims in the present application are now in condition for allowance.

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CONCLUSION

In response to the Office Action dated April 4, 2006, all the claims been amended pursuant to overcome the rejections under §112. As such, allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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